

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MORES

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product of our physical and economic conditions. It is impossible to discuss or criticise it. It is glorified for popularity, and is a subject of dithyrambic rhetoric. No one treats it with complete candor and sincerity. No one dares to analyze it as he would aristocracy or autocracy. He would get no hearing and would only incur abuse. The thing to be noticed in all these cases is that the masses oppose a deaf ear to every argument against the mores. It is only in so far as things have been transferred from the mores into laws and positive institutions that there is discussion about them or rationalizing upon them. The mores contain the norm by which, if we should discuss the mores, we should have to judge the mores. We learn the mores as unconsciously as we learn to walk and eat and breathe. The masses never learn how we walk, and eat, and breathe, and they never know any reason why the mores are what they are. The justification of them is that when we wake to consciousness of life we find them facts which already hold us in the bonds of tradition, custom, and habit. The mores contain embodied in them notions, doctrines, and maxims, but they are facts. They are in the present tense. They have nothing to do with what ought to be, will be, may be, or once was, if it is not now.

81. Blacks and whites in southern society. In our southern states, before the civil war, whites and blacks had formed habits of action and feeling towards each other. They lived in peace and concord, and each one grew up in the ways which were traditional and customary. The civil war abolished legal rights and left the two races to learn how to live together

under other
relations than before. The whites have never been
converted
from*the old mores. Those who still survive look
back with
regret and affection to the old social usages and
customary senti-
ments and feelings. The two races have not yet
made new
mores. Vain attempts have been made to control
the new order
by legislation. The only result is the proof that
legislation can-
not make mores. We see also that mores do not
form under
social convulsion and discord. It is only just now
that the new
society seems to be taking shape. There is a trend
in the mores
now as they begin to form under the new state of
things. It is